WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A sub-system comprising:

at least one passive component; and

an identification module for storing component information relating to said at least one passive component.

2.   The sub-system of Claim 1 wherein said component information comprises component identification information, component specifications, and component calibration data.

3. The sub-system of claim 1 further comprising a common interface for said at least one passive component and said identification module.

4. The sub-system of claim 3 wherein said interface comprises optical or electrical terminals for said at least one passive component and electrical terminals for said identification module.

5. The sub-system of claim 1 wherein said identification module comprises a non-volatile memory.

6. The sub-system of claim 5 further comprising:

a tester interconnected with said at least one passive component; and

a processor interconnected with said memory and with said tester.

7. The sub-system of claim 5 wherein said non-volatile memory comprises a read-only memory.

8. The sub-system of claim 7 wherein said identification further comprises a second memory, said second memory being a read-write memory.

9. The sub-system of claim 8 wherein said second memory stores historical performance information relating to said at least one passive component.

10. Apparatus for monitoring a passive component, comprising:

a non-volatile memory storing specifications for a passive component;

a tester for detecting signals at an input and output of said passive component; and

a processor operatively associated with said non-volatile memory and said tester for monitoring proper performance of said passive component.

11. A method for facilitating monitoring of a passive component, comprising:

storing component information for said passive component in a non-volatile memory; and

installing said non-volatile memory in a sub-system incorporating said passive component.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising configuring a common interface for said passive component and said non-volatile memory.

13. A method for monitoring a passive component, comprising:

retrieving specification information for said passive component from non-volatile memory installed in a sub-system incorporating said passive component;

sampling an input signal to and an output signal from said passive component;

determining performance characteristics for said passive component based on said sampling;

comparing said performance characteristics with said retrieved specification information.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising, based on said comparing, selectively generating a warning.